

Commission on the Status of Men

Minutes – May 29 2009
Legislative Office Building Room 207 - Concord, NH

1. Call to Order/Introduction of the Commissioners and Guests – **Chairman Joe Mastromarino called the meeting to order at 1:13. Others in attendance: Larry Colby, Mike Geanoulis, David Lauren, Dr Scott Meyer, and Cam Sinclair**
2. Adopt Agenda – **Commissioners Geanoulis and Meyer added items noted below in number 15. Commissioner Colby offered a motion to approve the agenda as amended: Motion: Mr. Colby; 2nd: Mr. Geanoulis; Discussion: None further and passed**
3. Secretary's Report/Approval of April Minutes – **Commissioner Lauren noted that Elaine Holden had not been formally invited to the April meeting and that he could not correct the agenda because he was absent from the meeting due to illness. Commissioner Geanoulis asked to change item 8 from the April minutes to reflect that testimony about paying child support should also note it was paid even during periods of homelessness. He also expanded item 10d, 2009 NH Child Support Guidelines Review and Recommendations to include details that none of the 17 recommendations from the 2004 report had ever been enacted. Scott offered a motion to revise the minutes to reflect these changes: Motion: Dr Meyer; 2nd Mr. Lauren; Discussion: None further and passed with Commissioner Lauren abstaining due to his absence at the meeting the minutes applied to. Colby stated he would make the changes and forward the minutes to Scott Garman for inclusion on the NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men) website**
4. Treasurer's Report – **Treasurer Lauren did not have a report to offer but noted that no activity had been recorded. Colby asked if NHPIRC (Parent Information and Resource Center) (John-Michael Dumais) ever get paid for the display ad. David stated the bill would have to be signed by him or by Chairman Mastromarino. Colby said he would email a copy to both and expressed his hope that this could be taken care of as soon after as possible. Larry offered a motion to approve the Treasurer's report: Motion: Mr. Colby; 2nd: Mr. Lauren; Discussion: None further and passed**
5. Dad Time - 12 min – **Larry informed the group that Dad Time has ended and that Jeff Drake of the Monadnock Family Resource Center has started a Successful Parenting class for dads (jdrake@mfs.org or jeff@successfulparents.com). He offered to contact Scott Garman and ask him to remove the link to Dad Time from the Website and to add Successful Parenting. David asked a general question about how the group decides on links and all agreed that each addition or removal is done case by case**
6. Internship - 2 min – **Scott shared a draft of a task description for an NHCSM intern. Members suggested minor changes. David offered a motion to adopt the Internship Task Description: Motion: Mr. Lauren; 2nd: Mr. Geanoulis; Discussion: None further and passed. David offered congratulations for the group to Commissioner Meyer for a job well done**

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7. NH HHS Commissioner Toumpas/'\$100,000,000 Dollar Man' Response – **Mike corrected \$1,000,000 million to \$1,000,000,000 billion. Chairman Mastromarino shared that no response had been received from Commissioner Toumpas or anyone else in the NH Department of Health and Human Services to the request for comment or testimony. Other Commissioners agreed**
8. Pro Bono Lawyers – **David offered to get and email the contact phone numbers for NH Legal Aid and the NH Bar Association to Larry. He also will seek out an attorney who works with and for men in divorce cases to come before the Commission**
9. Web Site Update – **As noted above Commissioner Colby will contact Scott Garman**
10. Public Input I – **None**
11. Commission Seat Update – **Chairman Mastromarino and other Commissioners agreed: no progress has been recorded by the Governor's Office or Executive Council**
12. Elaine Holden-Rivier College/Getting Men Involved: Appearance Update – **David asked for a motion to formally invite Ms Holden to appear before the Commission: Motion: Dr Mastromarino; 2nd: Mr. Lauren; Discussion: David confirmed Elaine Holden's willingness to appear at the June meeting. There was no further discussion and the motion carried**
13. Fathering Outreach – **(Commissioner Meyer added to this item under 15b below)**
14. [Northeast Family Strengthening Conference](#) Report – **Larry share very informal notes from the conference and he shared Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives brochure from ACF (Administration for Children and Families). Mike suggested inserting selected parts of the notes into the minutes as supportive of the Commission's work. One example was the keynote address by Tim Nelson about a study he conducted along with his wife, Kathryn Edin of low income fathers (Fatherhood in the Lives of Low Income Men). In his remarks Dr Nelson noted (as reported by Colby):**

The finding of his study was that low income young men were pleased at becoming fathers despite overwhelming reasons not to be: poverty, crime, lack of education, etc. The men in his study and collaborated by other studies were that young men about to become dads were happier than moms 75% to 58% when learning they were pregnant. He quoted many men in his study and '[Kids] gave me something to live for' was the overall, majority theme of the remarks. He talked about the general inflexibility of child support agencies and responded to my question about what changes he would make by saying that agencies might explore ways of supporting co-parenting classes and dialogue between young moms and dads. He also cited the harm done by denial of visitation both to the child and the father. He said support agencies should encourage visits in almost all cases especially by those dads paying financial support. **Commissioner Lauren reminded members that interpretations of remarks have to be noted as such – one person's perception. Colby said he agreed and that the study would be cited for others to research. He also noted the full name of the conference:**

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‘Empowering Families: Tools for Healthy Marriage, Responsible Fatherhood and Family Finances’ - The 2009 Northeast Family Strengthening Conference.

15. Other Agenda Items Brought Forward at Start of Meeting -20 min

a. RSA 167:2-b - PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO BLIND, AGED, OR DISABLED PERSONS, AND TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN – **Mike shared the following:**

167:2-b ‘Employment of Relatives of Persons Receiving Aid to Dependent Children or Public Welfare Assistance. – No person who is otherwise eligible for aid to dependent children or public assistance based on financial need shall receive public welfare assistance from the state unless and until all able-bodied adult **males**, under the age of 65 years...’

Commissioner Geanoulis suggested that the reference to males and not females may be discriminatory. Commission members agreed to look at the section in detail at the next meeting

b. Images of Fathering/Nurturing Males – **Commissioner Meyer said he had succeeded in having a montage created of men in nurturing roles and other positive roles. The montage is being created by Tim Palmison of Palmison Graphics of Plymouth. Scott said he will share it with other members upon completion. All agreed that members will discuss posters and other methods of dissemination at that time**

c. NH CAN – Child Advocacy Network – **Members discussed whether or not the Commission had been removed or ever a part of the NH CAN list of sponsors.**

Commissioners Colby and Geanoulis said they would research this for the next meeting

d. Child Support Review – **Members agreed to add this to the June agenda**

16. Announcements – **Commissioner Meyer confirmed that he had written and sent a letter to the White House supporting the creation of a White House Council on Women and Girls on behalf of the NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men). The letter (attached) also asks if the White House will be supporting a similar group to support men and boys.**

17. Public Input II -10 min - None

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Colby, Secretary